

Trans-European Network - Transport (TEN-T) policy European Union Consultation

Response of Norfolk County Council

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Q1: Are the principles and criteria for designing the core network, as set out above, adequate and practicable? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and what else could be taken into account?

Q1: Norfolk County Council response

It seems sensible to plan the core network linking the main nodes as proposed. The main strengths of this approach include that there will be a coherent network across the EU which should be planned to similar standards. The weaknesses include that the core network would not be able to link through all intermediate nodes if it is to be relatively direct. This highlights the importance of the comprehensive network and it will also be necessary to consider criteria to which this should be planned. For example, Great Yarmouth is listed as an important port for European access. However, the A47, part of the comprehensive network, is poor and offers unreliable and slow journey times. Planning criteria for routes on both the comprehensive and core network would mean that the network could be developed such that it fulfils the function envisaged of the TEN-T programme. (At present, many choose to use the A11 route to the A14 in preference to the A47 even though the A11 is not part of the TEN-T network and the A11 itself needs improvement through dualling the Fiveways to Thetford stretch.) Great Yarmouth port has recently completed its deep-water harbour and is now able to accommodate much larger ships than previously. The County Council has recently agreed a preferred route for a new crossing of the River Yare, which would provide a good connection between the port and the TEN-T network, and would allow the TEN-T network to better fulfil its function of a cross-Europe network.

Similarly, planning criteria may help to inform suitable rail journey times. In the case of the Norwich to London rail route, journey times are lengthy and need to be reduced to 1½ hours (from the current 2) for the line to provide similar levels of service to other comparable links.

Comprehensive network planning should also take into account functional links. The network should be planned taking into account those links that are important for the development and growth of centres they connect. We would also support routes that eliminate bottlenecks in

the TEN-T networks and promote polycentric development, releasing the pressure on major capital-capital axes.

Q2: To what extent do the supplementary infrastructure measures contribute to the objectives of a future-oriented transport system, and are there ways to strengthen their contribution?

Q2: Norfolk County Council response

These measures are supported, and there could also be reference to technological innovation to reduce the need to travel as one way of achieving the objectives.

However, the primary objective of the core transport network should be efficient and effective movement. The purpose of TEN-T is to establish a comprehensive and coherent network that meets customers' needs. The main goal of the network should be the reduction in travelling time and improvement in reliability by providing a framework for funding to tackle bottlenecks affecting long-distance traffic flows. The innovation and environmental considerations are secondary in this instance.

Q3: What specific role could TEN-T planning in general play in boosting the transport sector's contribution to the Europe 2020 strategic objectives?

Q3: Norfolk County Council response

Transport can particularly contribute to these including in particular by ensuring that the key links operate efficiently and effectively. For example, reliable and quick links to gateways can, in the case of ports, reduce costs for importers and exporters, and all business through supply chain linkages; access to airports is very important for high value-added businesses.

Therefore, TEN-T planning should help to contribute to these aims by identifying a network as outlined. This network should connect economic centres and gateways, and measures should be identified that would ensure efficient and effective movement on this network. Norfolk County Council co-funded a study looking at the wider economic benefits of dualling the A11; carried out by Atkins in 2008. This found that the road improvements would bring wider economic benefits of £136 million, adding over 20% to benefits identified in traditional appraisal. Therefore, dualling the A11 would support the priorities of Europe 2020, particularly in generating smart growth as the work found that of the £136m wider economic benefit, £101m was due to agglomeration effects.

Q4: In which way can the different sources of EU expenditure be better coordinated and/or combined in order to accelerate the delivery of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?

Q4: Norfolk County Council response

The suggestion of a funding strategy is welcome as this should provide the criteria by which funding would be judged. Project delivery could be accelerated by enabling release of funds throughout project development including for both implementation and for project development. Funding bids should be decided on the basis of how the project meets the TEN-T objectives and decisions about which projects to put forward for funding consideration from the TEN-T initiative could be made at a more local level. It is important that funding is made available for key projects which support the three priorities even if they are not on the

core network. That is, funding must also be available on the comprehensive network since this the comprehensive network is essential to support the core network.

Great Yarmouth port has recently completed its deep-water harbour and is now able to accommodate much larger ships than previously. The County Council has recently agreed a preferred route for a new crossing of the River Yare, which would provide a good connection between the port and the A47 TEN-T network. We will want to talk to the Commission about funding opportunities to bring forward this crossing.

Q5: How can an EU funding strategy coordinate and/or combine the different sources of EU and national funding and public and private financing?

Q5: Norfolk County Council response

At present it can be difficult for local authorities to engage with the funding processes due to their seeming complexity and differences in, for example, eligibility criteria between the different streams available. It would be helpful if the EU funding strategy rationalised this and provided an easy-to-follow framework and guidelines to assist clarity. This would enable better co-ordination and allow for funding partners to draw-in other sources of funding. This would, however, require DfT and the British government to align to such an approach (in the past bids for funding have had to be channelled through, and agreed by, Dft.)

Q6: Would the setting up of a European funding framework adequately address the implementation gap in the completion of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?

Q6: Norfolk County Council response

A funding framework may help partners negotiate their way through the requirements, but would not address the implementation gap unless funding were to be actually forthcoming to implement the scheme. Hence it would address the gap only if adequate funding were available.

Q7: In which way can the TEN-T policy benefit from the new legal instruments and provisions as set out above?

Q7: Norfolk County Council response

No comment or response